



Take 5

For Safety



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Walkin' in a winter wonderland

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Fall and winter landscapes provide glimpses into nature's beauty nearly unmatched by any other season, but these picturesque scenes are not without risk. Changing conditions like snow and ice make it especially important for both pedestrians and motorists to be extra vigilant on roadways during the colder months.

The number of pedestrian accidents is staggering. According to the National Safety Council, about 5,900 pedestrians are killed by motor vehicles annually, with an additional 85,000 suffering nonfatal injuries. Most pedestrian and bicyclist deaths occur at night in urban areas at non-intersection locations, but that doesn't mean there's no risk at other times or in other areas.

Alcohol and speed are an especially lethal combination for pedestrians. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that alcohol impairment — either by the driver or the pedestrian — was involved in 48 percent of traffic crashes that resulted in a pedestrian death. Of those pedestrians, 36 percent had a blood alcohol concentration above the legal limit of .08. And higher vehicle speeds increase both the likelihood of pedestrian accidents and the severity of injury, CPSC numbers show.

Soldiers can better protect themselves and their Family members by following these safety tips:

- Be alert and attentive to traffic and never cross the street until it's safe. Also remember a vehicle's stopping distance may be extended because of wintry road conditions.
- Watch where you're walking. Look for slippery conditions caused by snow, ice, wet pavement or any combination of these conditions.
- If walking with a hood over your head, turn your body in each direction to check for traffic. Your vision and hearing may be reduced because of the hood.
- Be responsible and obey Walk/Don't Walk signals. One-third of all fatal collisions result from pedestrians disregarding traffic signals or making dangerous judgments.
- Look left-right-left. If the road is clear, begin crossing. If you're in a country where motorists drive on the left side of the road, reverse the process and look right-left-right. If a vehicle is approaching, be patient and wait until it passes.

- Continue to check for traffic in all directions when crossing the street, especially where vehicles may be making right turns on red.
- If there's traffic at a crosswalk, make eye contact with drivers so they see you, understand your intentions and stop before you start to cross.
- Use sidewalks when they're available, and be sure of your footing when stepping from the curb to the street.
- Almost 50 percent of all pedestrian fatalities occur between 6 p.m. and midnight. Wearing reflective clothing is especially important during the fall and winter months, when daylight hours are shorter and people often wear dark coats or other clothing that may be difficult for motorists to see.
- Drivers must also be extra vigilant. Stay alert, ensure your lights are on and never take your eyes off the roadway. Always look for pedestrians at intersections and other areas where they're likely to appear, but remember they can be anywhere on the road. Vigilance could save a life — or change yours forever!

For additional information on pedestrian safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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